

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

West Pennard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane,
West Pennard,
Glastonbury,
BA6 8NT

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset County

Dates of inspection: Wednesday 20th May 2009

Date of last inspection: 19th January 2006

School's unique reference number: 123780

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Burchell

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Ruth Newton - 613

School context

West Pennard Church of England Primary is a rural school with 216 pupils arranged in 7 classes. Pupils come from local villages and the neighbouring area with some travelling considerable distance to attend. The socio-economic mix draws from families with farming and professional backgrounds. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is close to the national average. The headteacher took up post in September 2006 following 10 years as deputy headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of West Pennard Church of England Primary School as a church school are good.

The school has many outstanding features. Among these are the excellent relationships that are evident across the school between pupils, staff, governors and parents and also the way in which the Christian ethos supports and underpins all practice.

Established strengths

- Christian values that underpin all teaching and encourage children to live good lives
- Excellent relationships between pupils, staff, governors and parents and the interlinking relationships
- The caring and nurturing environment created within the school
- Outstanding leadership and Christian vision of the head teacher, supported by the excellent work of the Religious Education (RE) and Worship co-ordinator

Focus for development

- Further develop the role of Foundation Governors, involving them in reviews of RE and worship in order to carry out fully their responsibility for the Christian Foundation of the school.
 - Establish a system for the gathering and review of the impact of worship on pupils
 - Implement the current plans to give further opportunities for pupil participation in Collective Worship, particularly class worship
- Continue to develop existing church/school links and seek to work closely with the new vicar of St Nicholas church when appointed

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners

The Christian Foundation of the school clearly underpins its aims and this is demonstrated through the use of the acronym 'RESPECT' throughout the school. Clearly 'every child really does matter' and robust systems are in place to support SEN and challenge able, gifted and talented pupils. Everyone involved with the school is able to explain its distinctiveness as a church school. A Foundation governor said the school epitomized 'all the Christian values'; a

parent described how the school taught children to 'lead good lives' and a child explained that it meant 'we belong to the church'. Behaviour is excellent and the cheerful and responsive attitude of the children and adults, who all 'look out for each other', is exemplary. The unity of the staff team is a real strength of the school. Restorative Justice is being introduced in order to further support the high quality of care for pupils. It will be important to include the element of Christian forgiveness in this. Celebrating achievement is identified as having a very positive impact on pupils. The recent Ofsted report commented on the high level of care for pupils who 'feel safe and secure in the confidence that their concerns will be listened to and addressed'. Christian values influence relationships within the local community and towards the wider world e.g. distributing harvest gifts, supporting the education of a pupil in Africa. The spiritual development of the pupils is assured through the RE curriculum, Collective Worship and appreciation of the environment. An example of this could be seen where pupils had identified their own 'special place' around the school, photographed it and written a prayer that others could use when they were there.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Parents welcome the Christian value base that pupils are taught through Collective Worship and RE and they enjoy being able to join in some of the services. They spoke particularly of the very moving Easter liturgy led by Year 6. Worship is well planned on an annual cycle and includes all the major Christian festivals. The link governor for Collective Worship attends regularly and meets with the coordinator and reports to governors. The RE and Worship coordinator, appointed in September 2008, has brought much commitment and enthusiasm and this has been appreciated by parents and governors. All staff and some clergy from local churches lead the worship. A coloured cloth matching the church season is used along with a cross and candle as a focal point during worship. Songs, hymns (some Anglican) and prayers are included and a time is given for reflection. Sometimes children take part in role play or music, which they enjoy very much. They would like to be more involved and particularly like to lead worship at times. The school has plans for pupils to lead class based and key stage worship. Special services are held at the Parish Church which is very close to the school. Year 5 and Year 6 children take part in services and visits at Wells Cathedral. All classrooms have a special area and a class prayer book and these are often used at the start or end of the day.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

This is a very effective Church of England School. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding, particularly her clear Christian vision for the future of the school, shared by the whole school community. . Very good relationships with parents and other stakeholders contribute to the school's self-evaluation through discussion and questionnaires. The school receives support from the local church including the provision of books for children both as they enter and leave school. One INSET session per year is dedicated to developing the nature of teaching in a church school and governors and staff attend diocesan training. The RE and Worship coordinator is proactive in raising standards in RE and encouraging more visitors into school to lead worship. The headteacher ensures that time and care is given to staff, pupils, parents and governors for their needs, including their spiritual development. This clearly demonstrates that they are valued members of the school community. Good support is given by the diocese and the school uses the resource centre in Wells. Provision for pupils to learn about other cultures and faiths, through Cultural Diversity Week and in RE has been substantially improved since the last inspection as have links with the local church. Encouragement from the Chair of Governors has helped with the appointment of a Church/School link partner who has become RE and worship link governor. She often visits the school and has set up a thriving Family Service, in church, run with the help of parents. The school plans to develop and strengthen these links following the appointment of a new Vicar to St Nicholas Church, in the near future The impact of all this is best summed up in the words of a parent "Christian teaching is about learning to live in a very loving, positive relationship with everyone and that is what West Pennard teaches the children".

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